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Written statement* submitted by the Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Human Rights Situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Human Rights Situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Provided on: - Item 10: Situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo, including in the Kasai regions (HRC res 35/33 and 36/30)

Preface

The Democratic Republic of Congo has witnessed many cases of human rights violations related to mass killings, deteriorating refugee conditions, civil and political rights, as well as the restrictions to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Human rights defenders and journalists were harassed and intimidated, and arbitrarily detained.

Deteriorating conditions in Kasai region

In August 2016, violence erupted in the territory following the killing of the leader of a tribal militia, "Kamwina Nsano", in clashes with security forces. The conflict has caused the displacement of more than 1 million people from their homes, with some estimates reaching more than 4 million, as was the case for the recruitment of children for rape and destruction of more than 300 schools, markets, churches, police stations and government buildings [1]. There have also been reports of the killing of around 251 in the area of Camonia, including 62 children, 30 of whom are under 8 years of age by the "Pán Mora" community and the army. Another report indicated that there were at least 80 mass graves in Kasai from March to June 2017 [2].

Freedom of opinion and expression

Restrictions on freedom of expression continued in the Republic of Congo at all levels, with approximately 15 Congolese and foreign journalists subjected to intimidation and harassment and arbitrarily detained for their profession. In a number of cases, their equipment was confiscated or to delete what they had recorded. The Minister of Communications also issued a decree, imposing new rules requiring reporters to obtain a permit from the minister to leave the capital, Kinshasa.

More than 100 people, including 11 Congolese and foreign journalists, were also arrested during demonstrations organized by the "Fight for Change " to pressure the government to set a timeline for elections. The security forces and armed groups targeted human rights defenders and activists; among them were "Alex Tsungo Sekuliako" and "Alphonse Kalamba", were killed in North Kivu province.

The Senate passed a bill calling for greater protection for human rights defenders. However, the draft law provided a mandatory definition of what a human rights defender might be strengthened state control over human rights organizations and threatened to limit their activities. And could lead to the failure to recognize human rights organizations.[3]

Situation of refugees and internally displaced persons

Casted-based violence between TWAS and Luba continued in the provinces of Tanganyika and Upper Katanga. The number of internally displaced persons in Tanganyika has reached 500,000. Between January and September 2017, more than 5,700 Congolese fled to Zambia to escape the conflict. The authorities also continued to close internally displaced persons camps in the vicinity of the town of Kalemie, forcing displaced persons to return to their villages or

1 Millions are at risk of starvation due to conflict in Kasai Democratic Republic of Congo, BBC Arabic, October 29, 2017.
http://www.bbc.com/arabic/world-41794433

2 UN report: shocking testimonies of victims indicate Congolese government complicity in ethnic massacres in Kasai, UN News, 4 August 2017.
https://news.un.org/ar/story/2017/08/280462

3 Annual report 2017, Amnesty International.
https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1067002018ARABIC.PDF

even to live in worse conditions. A spokeswoman for the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (OHCHR), Ekitini Kiteddy, also said that office received information stating that Angola had deported 530 during the period 25-27 February 2018.[4] Congolese in a coercive manner

Prison conditions

The prisons have witnessed an unprecedented number of escapes throughout the country, with thousands of prisoners fleeing. There was also an attack on the Makala Rehabilitation center in Kinshasa's main prison. The authorities blamed the political group "Bondo Dia Kongur", for the attack that led to the escape of more than 4,000 prisoners. A further 930 prisoners escaped from the "Kangbaye Central Prison" in the city of Bayi, including prisoners holding death penalties in the Beni territory. Hundreds of other detainees escaped from prisons and police detention centers in Bandundu-Ville, Kasangolo, Kalemi, Matit, Walikale, Dungu, Bukavu, Kabinda, Uvira, Bunia, Muyinga and Pweto.

Prison conditions were also overcrowded, conditions of detention remained dire, with inadequate food and drinking water and lack of health care. Dozens of prisoners have died from starvation and diseases.

Absence of fair trial and accountability

In July 2017, seven soldiers were sentenced to one year in prison and life imprisonment in connection with extrajudicial executions in Mwanza-Lumba. The sentences followed a trial in which the victims were not identified or their relatives weren't given the opportunity to testify before the court or to allow them to petition Reparation. Zayed Catalan (Swedish) and Michael Sharp (US), members of the UN Security Council working group on general issues of sanctions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, were also executed and around 22 people were killed in Beni territory. More than 100 were kidnapped have taken place in Goma that armed groups continued to murder and rape in North and South Kivor and Ituri, and the armed conflict between the Hutus and Nandis in North Kivur led to displacement and destruction, particularly in the areas of Rutshuru and Lubero. [5]

Outbreak of deadly epidemics

Cholera outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the disease claimed 528 lives and reached "alarming estimates". The United Nations has declared cholera as a serious public health problem, with millions of suspected cases recorded every year, and the disease claimed 817 lives last year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). "The epidemic has reached t 20 of the country's 26 provinces," [6] the organization stated. The World Health Organization (WHO) also announced the outbreak of the Ebola virus in the north of the country. Three people have died since the outbreak of the disease in the Lekati area in the north of the Democratic Republic of Congo. [7]

Rights of Child

It is estimated that 2000 children have been used by militias in the affected area and that since the onset of the crisis in Kasai, at least 300 children have been injured seriously in the violence, and more than 4,000 children had been separated from their families, and UNICEF had warned that the 6 million total number of children in; Lim Kasai all are at great risk, unless the situation improves rapidly [8].

Recommendations

4UN report: shocking testimonies of victims indicate Congolese government complicity in ethnic massacres in Kasai, UN News, op. Cit.

5 Annual Report 2017, Amnesty International, op. Cit.

According to the World Health Conference, for more details on the following link: 6
https://goo.gl/HeDVjb
According to a World Health Organization (WHO) press conference, for more details, the following link can be 7 found:
https://news.un.org/ar/story/2017/05/276512
According to the United Nations news website, the article can be read in full on the link:8
https://news.un.org/ar/story/2017/04/275112

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association recommends the following in regard to human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo:

- To work in every way to stop the violence in Kasai province, through the intervention of regional and international organizations such as the African Union and the United Nations, and to find a peaceful settlement to the conflict in the territory. Comprehensive investigations shall also be carried out against all those responsible for the murders and mass graves committed against Congolese civilians.

- The opening of civil and political space for jurists and opponents and the cessation of security prosecutions. Principles of freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstrations shall be applied. To omit any legislation aimed at restricting the work of human rights defenders, the state's control over legal organizations and the curtailment of its activities.

- The settlement of any form of casted-based violence between ethnic groups and the rejection of any ethnic disagreement that may affect the situations of the internal groups and cause controversy between them.

- Settlement of refugee situations with neighbouring States, whether legal settlement; particularly with the Angolan State; humanitarian assistance in cooperation with the agencies of the Red Cross, UNICEF and FAO.

- Working to improve prison conditions in terms of human rights, which serves as a means of reform and rehabilitation rather than of creating violent cells. A comprehensive security plan must be developed to secure those prisons, where frequent escapes have increased in recent periods.

- Open an extensive investigation into the executions of foreign nationals and Experts working group of the Security council. Emphasis is also placed on accountability in the spread of killings, abductions and rapes throughout the country, in particular in the Kasai, the provinces of Kasaï, Goma, Kivu and Ituri.

- Work to address rapidly deployable diseases and epidemics such as cholera and Ebola in the various regions of the Congo, and to fully coordinate with the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the Red Cross.

- Action to stop the exploitation of children by armed militias and to avoid any acts of violence. The promotion of a healthy environment for children, especially in conflict areas and areas of displacement and asylum.